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A NEW EXPOSITION OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

During the years 1911-15 Dr. A. Lukyn Williams delivered a series of twelve Warburton Lectures, which have been published in a stately volume.¹ They were written, he tells us, with a triple purpose—to interpret the First Gospel in the sense its author meant it to bear, to apply the teaching so interpreted to the problems of today, and (incidentally) to present a Christian apologetic for the benefit of Jewish readers.

These three aims have been pursued systematically throughout the book, but to them there has constantly been added a fourth, which the author unfortunately has not recognized as a distinct aim. That is, he has endeavored to expound, not only the meaning of the First Evangelist, but also the historic facts underlying the record, and the two problems are continually confused. He is, to be sure, familiar with the elements of the synoptic problem, and he assures us that he accepts the usual hypotheses. But he makes it evident that synoptic research means to him mere literary investigation without historic significance; Matthew is based on Mark, past doubt, but Matthew's version is wholly as accurate as Mark's and can be used without reference to Mark's. So we are told, e.g., that Matt. 16:16 proves that Jesus was actually called "Son of God" in his lifetime, and Dalman is taken to task for asserting the contrary (pp. 316 f.). The results of such a method need no description. They are seen at their worst in the eighth lecture, devoted to the topic, "Son of Man." As all the occurrences are considered of equal weight, the consequence is sheer bewilderment.

On the other hand, Dr. Williams' treatment of the First Gospel as a piece of first-century apologetic is very well done. For such a task some familiarity with talmudic literature is indispensable, and Dr. Williams' knowledge of this field is really adequate. And he uses it with a caution that should be impressed on all students of Judaism: "It has ever been a temptation to students, Jewish and Christian alike, to foist in upon us any and every statement of the Mishna, and even of the Talmuds, as an illustration of the life and thought of the Jews in the early part of the first century. Nothing can be more absurd" (p. 150). The application of the Jewish material has led to the discussion of the arguments of many modern Jewish scholars—Bacher, Schechter, the two Friedländers, Dr. Montefiore, etc.—and this in turn has led to a formal anti-Jewish apologetic, which forms the most

¹ *The Hebrew-Christian Messiah; Or, The Presentation of the Messiah to the Jews in the Gospel According to St. Matthew.* By A. Lukyn Williams. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1916. xxii+425 pages. 10s. 6d.

interesting portion of the book. The central question in the discussion of Jesus' teaching is found in the value of free and inspired personality as contrasted with "nomism." And the problem of "practicability" is solved by finding Jesus' emphasis on clarity of ideal rather than on actual achievement. This would seem to be right, although, as the author adds, "the characteristics enjoined . . . will be found eventually to mark every one of the perfected saints" (p. 235). Interim-ethic ideas are discarded with decision, as would be expected in a writer who holds that Jesus really looked forward to a church developing throughout centuries. The apocalyptic material is disposed of by looking forward to a literal, visible reappearance of the Messiah at some time in the future. It can only be regretted that a construction of this kind has been grafted upon an otherwise really admirable treatment.

The remaining part of the book—the practical exposition—calls for little comment. Dr. Williams is evidently a skilled and experienced preacher, and his notes often rise to a level of real distinction.

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AFTER THE WAR, WHAT?

The principal governments of the world are bending all their energies to bringing the war to the conclusion which seems to them good. Humanity is counting the hours until war's horror and chaos shall be over and it can give its strength again to progress and development. But progress is not entirely arrested by the war. Indeed, many steps forward seem to have been hastened by the arousing and setting free of forces immense and difficult to control, but which in quieter times would have remained sleeping much longer. It is not only wise, but indeed a very pressing duty, for those whose strength is not fully taken up with the war itself or the industries necessary to maintain it and to keep some part of humanity alive while it still rages, to look ahead to see what conditions may be expected when its fury has ceased, and particularly to prepare to make those conditions, as rapidly as possible, what the interests of humanity require.

An exceedingly helpful book, called very aptly *Human Ideals*¹—it might almost better be called "Divine Ideals for Humanity"—is offered

¹ *Human Ideals*. By Frederick A. M. Spencer. London: Unwin, 1917. xi+280 pages. 6s. net.